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ABSTRACT

Teacher and paraprofessional ratings of the support received from the New York City Board of Education's Division of Special Education's Summer 1987 Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program exceeded the program objectives. The Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program provided instructional support to teachers of 280 eligible immigrant English proficient (EP) and limited English proficient (LEP) students in the extended school year program for the severely handicapped. The program operated at 11 sites in all five boroughs. Findings from evaluation questionnaires completed by participating teachers and paraprofessionals are the following: (1) participants showed a statistically significant gain in their perceptions of the knowledge they acquired about instructing immigrant EP and LEP students; (2) more than 75 percent of participants rated their training as relevant, applicable to their daily activities, and superior in quality; (3) a majority of participants reported that all types of training were helpful; (4) participants especially wanted to learn more about using objective-based classroom materials and developing awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences; (5) the unavailability of equipment stored for the summer inhibited program success. Recommendations for improving the program are the following: (1) emphasize ways to use specific materials and to develop awareness and sensitivity to cultural factors; and (2) insure that necessary school-based equipment is available during the summer. Two tables of statistical data are included. (FMW)

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DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
FEDERAL EMERGENCY IMMIGRANTS
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
SUMMER 1987

OEA Evaluation Report

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FINAL REPORT

June, 1988

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DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION FEDERAL EMERGENCY IMMIGRANTS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SUMMER 1987

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SUMMARY OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY
IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
SUMMER 1987

- The Division of Special Education's Summer 1987 Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program was fully implemented for teachers and paraprofessionals of immigrant English proficient (EP) and limited English proficient (LEP) students.

- Teacher and paraprofessional ratings of the support they received exceeded the program objectives.

The Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program provided instructional support to teachers of 280 eligible immigrant English proficient (EP) and limited English proficient (LEP) students in the extended school year program for the severely handicapped. The program operated at 11 sites in all five boroughs.

All program objectives were met. Participants showed a statistically significant mean gain ($p < .05$) in their perceptions of the knowledge they acquired about instructing immigrant EP and LEP students as a result of the training. More than 75 percent of participants rated their training as relevant, applicable to their daily activities, and superior in quality. Of the 57 teachers and paraprofessionals receiving training, over 78 percent found it relevant, over 84 percent reported it was applicable to their daily activities, and 93 percent rated it superior in quality. Thus, all objectives were exceeded.

A majority of teachers and paraprofessionals reported that all types of training were helpful. They especially wanted to learn more about using objective-based classroom materials and developing awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences.

Teachers and trainers reported that the unavailability of equipment stored for the summer inhibited program success.

These findings lead to the following recommendations:

- Emphasize ways to use specific materials and to develop awareness and sensitivity to cultural factors.

- Insure that necessary school-based equipment is available during the summer.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Educational Assessment's (O.E.A.'s) evaluation of the third year of the Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program operated by the Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) during the summer of 1987. The program, funded under a federal grant, was designed to provide staff development and instructional support to teachers and paraprofessionals of severely handicapped immigrant English proficient (EP) and limited English proficient (LEP) students. In summer 1986, the program provided training institutes and funds to enable teachers and paraprofessionals to participate in courses offered by local colleges. In 1987, D.S.E. trainers provided materials, family workshops to parents, and school-based teacher training to 57 teachers and paraprofessionals who teach a targeted population of 280 eligible students in an extended school year program for the severely handicapped. The program operated an 11 sites located in all five boroughs.

DESCRIPTION

The Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program was designed to provide individual, in-class instructional support for the purpose of improving teachers' ability to work with program-eligible students. The program was to supply training materials ($3,000.00 in materials per trainer) and provide demonstrations of their use. Participants were trained in conducting parent workshops for the purpose of increasing parental involvement in their children's educational development,

including understanding parental and student rights.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

The program served 280 severely handicapped immigrant students (in this country less than three years) identified by the Office of Student Information Services as participants in the extended school year program in Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) V, VI and VII classes. These students came from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean.

REPORT FORMAT

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II describes the evaluation methodology. Chapter III presents an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative findings. Chapter IV offers conclusions and recommendations based upon the results of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

O.E.A. assessed the Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program by examining questionnaire responses from teachers and paraprofessionals participating in the program.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed two major areas of the program: implementation and outcomes. Evaluation questions included the following:

Implementation

- What was the level and quality of program implementation?

Outcome

- Did teachers and paraprofessionals increase their knowledge of methods and techniques for instructing severely handicapped LEP and EP immigrant students?
- Did participants find the training they received relevant?
- Were participants able to apply what they learned to their daily activities?
- What was the overall assessment of the program?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

All 57 teachers and paraprofessionals working with the 280 eligible students at 11 community schools in the five boroughs completed staff development forms.

Instruments

The O.E.A.-developed staff development questionnaire elicited the participants' perceptions of the knowledge they gained and the quality of the program, and asked for suggestions for future programs.

Data Collection

Program participants completed the staff development questionnaires at the end of the program in August. The program manager delivered the forms to O.E.A. for analysis.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Trainers for the Federal Immigrant Assistance Program consisted of a program manager and five bilingual/English as a second language (E.S.L.) resource teachers (one in each borough). They provided school-based training to teachers and paraprofessionals working with the targeted population during July and August. Each trainer spent approximately 12 days conducting these activities at two sites in their assigned borough. Trainers also participated in weekly staff development meetings, organized by the program manager, to discuss ongoing implementation.

The trainers provided instructional support in the following ways: 1) they demonstrated lessons and E.S.L. teaching techniques in the classroom, created objective-based classroom materials; 2) trainers worked directly with individual students, assisting teachers in the classroom. To promote a multicultural atmosphere, trainers created bulletin boards expressing multicultural themes and introduced students, teachers, and paraprofessionals to the music and dance of different nations; 3) they conducted two workshops for parents at each site to introduce the program, to inform parents about educational issues and student rights, and to emphasize the importance of extending the educational milieu to the home environment. They stressed parental involvement in their children's education by suggesting specific activities for the home and encouraging

family outings. With the help of a professional social worker, they introduced parents to simple behavior management techniques designed to help child learn positive behaviors.

Parental attendance varied from site to site, ranging from poor (three parents) to good (over 20). Resource trainers reported that those parents who attended workshops in the schools responded favorably to them. At some sites, parents spontaneously requested an additional workshop in order to cover the information in more detail.

OUTCOMES

Participants rated the effectiveness of the instructional support they received by reporting on perceived changes in their knowledge and attitudes. They reported their evaluations on the O.E.A.-developed data retrieval form. The data retrieval form contained nine items, two of which were open-ended and asked for suggestions for the future. The seven close-ended items required that participants rate the services they had received on a six-point scale where one was low and six high. Questions dealt with the extent of knowledge possessed by participants both before and after training, the relevance and applicability of what was learned, whether there had been sufficient opportunity to participate, the helpfulness of materials used, and requested that participants assess the training they had received.

The evaluation objective for the program's instructional support was:

- Participating teachers and paraprofessionals will indicate that they have increased their knowledge about instructing severely handicapped LEP or EP culturally diverse students.

O.E.A. used a t-test to analyze the statistical significance of the perceived gain in knowledge that teachers reported on questionnaires administered at the end of the training program. The mean gain of 1.1 (S.D. = 1.02) was statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that this program objective was achieved.

To determine the relevance and quality of the training for all participants the program objective was that:

- Seventy-five percent of participants will indicate the instructional support they received was relevant to their professional responsibilities, that they could apply what they learned to their daily activities; and that they would assess the overall quality of the training as excellent.

On the six-point scale of the data retrieval form, over 78 percent of the 57 teacher and paraprofessional participants assigned a value of four, five, or six (values at the higher end of the scale) to the question assessing training relevance. Thus, the part of the evaluation objective dealing with the relevance of instructional support was met. (See Table 1.) Regarding the applicability to their daily activities of what participants learned, over 84 percent assigned a value of four through six to the relevant question, indicating this part of the objective was also achieved.

In rating the program's effectiveness, 93 percent (53) of

Table 1

Teachers' and Paraprofessionals' Perceptions of Quality of Training

	Number of Teachers	Mean Rating	S.D.	Percent Indicating Positive Response[a]
Relevance of training to responsibilities	57	4.4	1.1	78.9
Applicability of what was learned to daily activities	57	4.6	1.0	84.2
Overall assessment of training	57	4.9	1.0	93.0

[a]On a six-point scale, ratings of four, five, and six signify a positive response.

- All components of the quality of training objective were met.

the participants selected the higher values of four through six in response to the relevant question on the data retrieval form. This objective was not only met, but was exceeded. (See Table 2.) Teachers reported that materials and instructional support provided by the program were helpful. The only impediment to complete program success reported by teachers was that they had difficulty in obtaining school-based equipment which had been locked up for the summer (e.g., film projectors).

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING

Teachers and paraprofessionals reported favorably on the training they received. A majority considered every type of assistance provided by bilingual/E.S.L. trainers to be helpful. They considered it particularly helpful to learn techniques for working with severely handicapped LEP students, to prepare lessons using E.S.L. methodologies, and to develop objective-based classroom materials. They wanted to learn more about using specific materials and to develop an awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences. (See Table 2.)

Table 2

Percentage of Participants Approving of and Desiring More Assistance

(N = 57)

Type of Assistance	Percent Considering It Helpful	Percent Wanting More In Future
Preparing lessons using E.S.L. methodologies	66.7	54.4
Developing objective-based classroom materials	63.2	66.7
Using specific materials	50.9	91.2
Developing awareness and sensitivity to cultural factors	57.9	73.7
Learning techniques for working with severely handicapped LEP students	73.7	45.6

- A majority of teachers and paraprofessionals considered each type of assistance to be helpful.
- The average percentage of participants desiring more assistance was 66.3.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

O.E.A.'s evaluation of the 1987 Federal Emergency Immigrant Assistance Program indicates that the program was satisfactorily implemented and that its objectives were fully met.

A majority of the 57 teachers and paraprofessionals participating reported favorably on every aspect of the instructional support they received. Parents attending family workshops rated them favorably. Over 90 percent of teachers and paraprofessionals positively assessed the assistance they received. They reported a significant improvement in their knowledge about working with the program's eligible student population. Participants particularly wanted to know more about utilizing specific materials and developing sensitivity to cultural factors.

Some teachers reported that difficulties in obtaining school-based equipment during the summer was an inhibiting factor program to success.

These conclusions lead to the following recommendations:

- Emphasize ways to use specific materials and to develop awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences.
- Insure that necessary school-based equipment is available during the summer.